

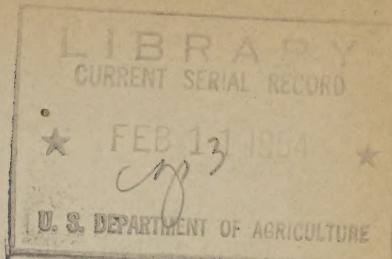
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S. D.—70. [This leaflet is distributed only with the seeds to which it relates.]

United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY.

New and Rare Seed Distribution,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE BUSH, OR "BUNCH," VELVET BEAN.

OBJECT OF THE DISTRIBUTION.—The distribution of new and rare seeds has for its object the dissemination of new and rare crops, improved strains of staple crops, and high-grade seed of crops new to sections where the data of the Department indicate such crops to be of considerable promise. Each package contains a sufficient quantity for a preliminary trial, and where it is at all practicable the recipient is urged to use the seed for the production of stocks for future plantings. It is believed that if this practice is followed consistently it will result in a material improvement in the crops of the country. Please make a full report on the inclosed blank regarding the results you obtain with the seed.

DESCRIPTION.

The Bush variety of velvet bean, probably a sport from the Alabama variety, differs from all other velvet beans in cultivation in being nontwining—that is, strictly “bunch” or bush in habit. This variety was first detected in 1914 as a single plant on the farm of Mr. Roan Beasley, at Kite, Ga., who carefully saved the seed, and from the crop of the season of 1915 obtained about 60 bushels, which were distributed in his vicinity. Since that time the variety has become abundantly established in many places, and in some localities it has practically replaced other varieties.

The individual plants average about 3 feet in height—that is, about as high as the ears on corn plants. They branch near the ground, most of the branches being short, but occasional ones are 5 to 7 feet long. The long branches show no inclination to twine about cornstalks. The stalks of the flower clusters and pod clusters are usually longer than in other varieties. The pods are all produced near the base of the plant, but the stem is stiff enough to support the clusters, so that few of them rest on the ground. In appearance, the pods and seeds are exactly like the Alabama and Florida varieties, and the pods have the same ability to resist decay when they lie on the ground. The Bush velvet bean ripens a little later than the Alabama variety, and the yield is apparently slightly less.

The advantages of the Bush velvet bean are: (1) It does not twine on the corn, and therefore does not tend to pull down the stalks; for the same reason it is especially valuable for planting in orange and other groves where any variety which climbs the trees is decidedly objectionable, particularly while the trees are young; and (2) it may be used as a hay crop after the manner of cowpeas, as the absence of twining stems does away with the common difficulty in mowing ordinary velvet beans, which make a tangled mass of stems.

Correlated with its bushy habit, this variety makes rather less growth than either the Alabama or Georgia varieties and perhaps would hardly be as desirable where the crop is used purely for soil improvement, as the amount of herbage would be somewhat less.

Where the entire crop of mature beans is to be gathered, the Bush velvet bean is perhaps not so desirable as the twining varieties, as the pods are all produced very near the ground and thus the labor involved in gathering them is increased.

The Bush velvet bean is certainly worthy of extensive testing. The wide popularity which it has already achieved in the limited areas where it is well known indicates that it may become highly useful and particularly valuable for the special purposes indicated. The merits of the variety which receive most praise are (1) that it does not pull the corn down, (2) that it can be cut for hay, and (3) that it is ideal for growing in citrus and other orchards.

PLANTING.

Planting should not be done too early, but at about the same time as cotton, as the beans do not make a thrifty growth until the soil has become well warmed. One bushel of seed will plant 2 to 3 acres. The seeds should be dropped 2 to 3 feet apart in rows 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart and covered the same as corn. The beans may be planted either alone or in the same rows with corn. After planting, the crop should be cultivated about like cowpeas.

Approved:

W.M. A. TAYLOR,

Chief of Bureau.

AUGUST 8, 1922.